



SMOKEY BEAR'S 67TH BIRTHDAY

This summer's wildfires remind us how devastating unintended fires can be to both private landowners and our public lands. As of August 2, approximately 46,390 wildfires have burned 6,111,896 acres of forests and grasslands across the country. While there has been fewer fires than an average year, there has been far more acreage burned this year. Now, more than ever, it is important to remember Smokey Bear and his famous adage, "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires."



The first poster of Smokey Bear was introduced on August 9, 1944, depicting a bear pouring a bucket of water on a campfire. Almost six years after Smokey Bear was introduced, his story came to life on the Lincoln National Forest. On May 9, 1950 the Capitan Fire was

burning through the mountains north of Capitan, New Mexico when a fire crew battling the blaze discovered a very scared and burned bear cub that had been clinging fearfully to a burned tree. They



dubbed the tiny cub "Hot Foot Teddy" and he became America's much-loved symbol of fire prevention.

Although Smokey's original message "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" was later changed to "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires" in 2001, his message is just as timely today as it was sixty-seven years ago.

On August 9th, from 10:00 am to 11:30 am, children and their parents are invited to help Smokey celebrate his birthday with games, activities, and a visit from Smokey Bear at the Montrose Public Lands Center. Registration is not required; however families are encouraged to arrive by 10:00 am to begin the scheduled games and activities. Smokey Bear will arrive at 11:00 am for a birthday celebration including refreshments.

For more information about the event, contact Katie Grablander at (970) 240-5308. To learn more about Smokey Bear, visit www.smokeybear.com.

WEST REGION WILDFIRE COUNCIL

The West Region Wildfire Council met on July 21st at the Montrose County Fairgrounds. After several years of working to complete county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for all counties represented by the WRWC, those CWPPs have been finalized and turned over to the respective clients. The county Emergency Managers – acting as the lead on their respective plans – will be gathering signatures from the plan's Core Team before submitting the plans to the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS).

During the meeting, both the CSFS and federal partners provided a fire season update including an outlook for the remainder of the season from Predictive Services, current fuel moistures across the region, and a status of local resources available to respond to existing and anticipated fire conditions.

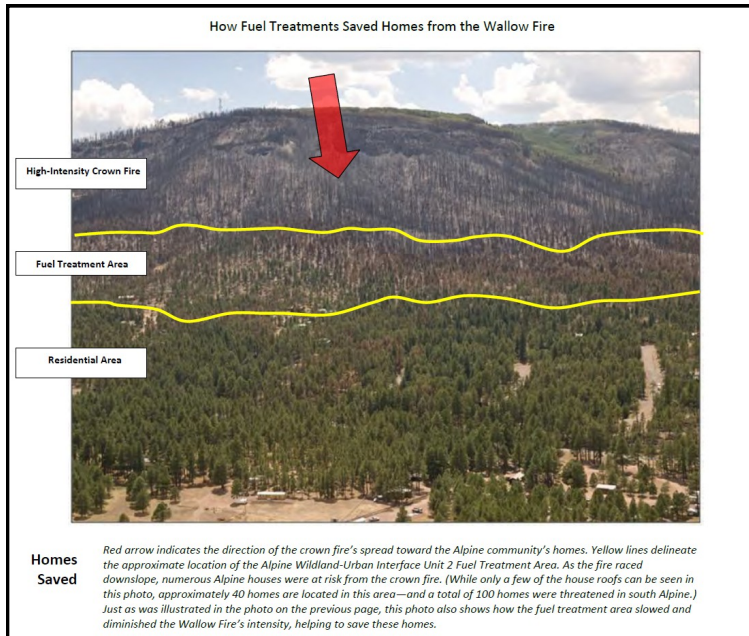
There was also an update on the status of applications from private land owners wishing to complete wildfire mitigation around their homes using the WRWC mini grants. To date, 20 applications have been received. The WRWC Steering Committee has reviewed eight applications

thus far and made funding recommendations based on the submitted proposals. At this time, five of the applicants have accepted the award amount and one has chosen not to utilize the amount awarded through WRWC. The remaining applications are still being reviewed or require further clarification. The awards are intended to assist private land owners in reducing their wildfire risk through defensible space and other recommendations defined in a CWPP. Although the projects focus on individual treatments, an effort has been made to group projects within a localized area.

The Council also updated the members on San Miguel County's recent intergovernmental effort to address and implement their county's CWPP. *For more, see "Intergovernmental CWPP Task Force."*

The Council addressed a request to change meeting times from midday to late afternoon in an effort to include more fire department members in WRWC. The meetings will still be held on the second Thursday of the month in Montrose, but will now begin at 4 pm rather than 10 am. The next meeting is scheduled for **August 11 at 4:00 pm** at the **Montrose Public Lands Center**.

FUEL TREATMENTS SAVED HOMES ON WALLOW FIRE



The following is an excerpt from a recent report "How Fuel Treatments Saved Homes from the 2011 Wallow Fire:

Without Fuel Treatments: 'Many of the Houses Would Have Caught Fire and Burned to the Ground'

The Wallow Fire starts on Sunday, May 29, 2011. On the fire's first and second day—and for three of the next five days—"Red Flag" (windy and dry) conditions thrive. By the morning of the fire's sixth day—June 3—the Wallow Fire has burned 40,000 acres—almost 63 square miles. The fire has now moved north to the junction of Forest Roads 26 and 24. Adding to the severe intensity of the fire's spread, the winds have increased and relative humidity has decreased.

By noon on June 3, fire behavior becomes even more intense as the Wallow Fire makes an extended "crown fire" charge toward the community of Alpine, Arizona. Within three hours, this crown fire crests the ridge above Alpine. The blaze quickly moves downslope toward numerous homes located along the southwest outskirts of town.

Soon, this crown fire threatening these Alpine homes starts showering embers as far as one mile downwind—igniting numerous spot fires out ahead of the main fire.

Fuel Treatment Units Slow the Wallow Fire— Allow Firefighters to Safely Attack

As the main fire enters the ½ mile-wide White Mountain Stewardship Fuel Treatment units located above Alpine, the blaze drops from up in the tree crowns down to the surface level. The fire's rate-of-spread dramatically slows. Thanks to the influence of these previously developed treatment units—implemented beginning in 2004—flame lengths are now low enough to allow firefighters to safely attack the fire and protect homes and property.

How Fuel Treatments Saved Homes from the Wallow Fire

Engines and crews successfully extinguish the spot fires. To further protect residents' houses, these firefighters also conduct low-intensity "firing operations" from roadways and other fuel breaks. These aggressive firefighting suppression actions continue throughout the evening—successfully halting the spread of the Wallow Fire into the community of Alpine. In fact, all of this community's structures—but one—are saved from the fire's attack.

(Actually, this single structure burned several days later when an ember—most likely transported downwind during the June 3 crown fire run—smoldered for several days before flaring up.)

Even though they experienced ember showers and low-intensity surface fires, many of the other Alpine structures that survived the Wallow Fire did so because of these prior fuel treatments, as well as "Firewise" construction and landscaping completed by the land owners. There's no question that these previous fuel reduction actions allowed the firefighters to safely and aggressively fight the Wallow Fire.

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To read the complete report, visit: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5318765.pdf, or contact Judy Palmer, Forest

LAMBORN/MACDONALD PROJECT

The Bureau of Land Management is proposing a vegetation treatment project in Delta and Gunnison Counties approximately three miles SW of Paonia, CO. The Lamborn/MacDonald Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project is designed to reduce hazardous wildland fuels and the potential for catastrophic fire, improve wildlife habitat and maintain or achieve land health on public lands.

The Lamborn/MacDonald area is important winter range habitat for deer and elk, and also supports grazing for cattle. This area contains natural springs located on adjacent USFS lands that provide Paonia with their municipal water supply. These areas have been encroached with young trees and thick mountain shrubs. This process has decreased palatable forage for the deer and elk, as well as increasing the risk of catastrophic fire to this important habitat.

In an effort to decrease wildfire risk and improve wildlife habitat, the project proposal includes thinning approximately 224 acres and treating

another 520 acres with prescribed fire. Much of the proposed activity would occur in a previous vegetation improvement project that was completed in 1982. To provide for a safe and effective prescribed burn, mechanical means may be used to construct fuel breaks to contain the prescribed fire and to protect infrastructure such as fences and water facilities in the project area. Activities would occur during spring and fall.

There has been considerable interest in the project proposal in the previous month including several news articles, radio segments, and a few public meetings. On July 12, representatives from the Uncompahgre Field Office and MIFMU made a presentation at the Paonia work session to describe the proposal and the process. The public comment period for the proposal was extended until August 1 to ensure that interested parties had the appropriate amount of time to respond.

MIFMU FIRE SUPPRESSION CREWS

Each year, MIFMU crews respond to local wildfires, assist with resource projects, and are dispatched to fires outside of MIFMU. Although we are all greatly aware of, and appreciate their challenging work, many of us rarely get to interact with the firefighters in the green and yellow engines.

Norwood :

BLM Engine 3418 (Type 4)

Foreman: Luke Odom has been on for 13-14 years. He recently moved to Montrose, but still spends time in Nucla.

Assistant Foreman: Tanner Hutt has been with MIFMU since graduating high school. Tanner lives in Norwood, but travels in winter and is working to become a Dive Master. Tanner hopes to become a smoke jumper someday.

Crew: Sam Dinardo has been a seasonal firefighter for 3 years. He lives in MA and studies microbiology. Sam is working toward becoming a hot shot.

Crew: Casey Griffith recently graduated from Telluride High School. This is his first season.

USFS Engine 651 (Type 6)

Foreman: Troye Floyd is currently on a detail as a HECM in NV. Troye will be returning in September and will transfer to Montrose upon return to fill as the IA Foreman. Troye is working toward career in structure fire.

Assistant Foreman: Joe Duensing is the acting Foreman. He has been on for 8-9 years, and has worked up from a seasonal to Assistant Foreman.

Crew: Wade Hutt has been in fire for 7 years. He attends school in spring at CMC so he can work through the fall.

Tyler Campbell is from Florissant, CO and has worked in gold mines. He has been on for 3 years and also attends school at CMC in the spring.

Crew: Clay Crosswhite has been on for 2 years and has the distinction of being a certified "Safe Tractor Operator." Clay is a ski instructor in Telluride in the winter.

Montrose:

USFS Engine 3629 (Type 4)

Foreman: Jeff Davids has been with MIFMU for 8 years. He is from AZ. He lives in SC in the winter and spends time fly fishing, kayaking, and surfing.

Assistant Foreman: Jeff Gehlhausen has been with MIFMU for 5 years. Jeff is from IN. He enjoys classic rock music and video games.

Crew: Daniel Leonardi has been with MIFMU for 4 years. Daniel is an Army

Veteran that enjoys hunting and brewing beer.

Crew: John Wroblewski has been with MIFMU for 2 years and comes from MI. He has the distinction of having the most nicknames on his crew. John enjoys snowboarding in the winter.

USFS Engine 662 (Type 6)

Foreman: Cody Russell has been with MIFMU since 2004, but started fire in 1997. He is from CO and AZ and in the off season likes to travel and snowboard.

Assistant Foreman: Ryan Sealock has been with MIFMU since 2002. He is from NV and loves to buy a new/used truck and sell it every 3 months.

Crew: Martha Schoppe has been with MIFMU since 2010. She started her career in fire in 2009. Martha is from ME and will be attending nursing school this fall.

Crew: David Turner has been with MIFMU since 2010. He is from Montrose and is studying at UNC to become an English teacher.

USFS Engine 663 (Type 6)

Foreman: Frank Rice has 15 years in fire, 10 of which are with MIFMU. He is originally from NY.

Assistant Foreman: Ryan McCulley has 6 years in fire - 4 of which are with MIFMU. He is originally from TN. Ryan is currently on a smoke effects research detail.

Crew: Zac Massey has 3 years in fire - 2 with MIFMU. He is originally from AZ.

Crew: Sam Fowler has been with MIFMU for 2 years. He is from Palisade, CO and will return to school mid-August.

BLM Engine 3421 (Type 4)

Foreman: Maple Taylor is started in fire in 1998. He is from Montrose.

Assistant Foreman: Brandon Frey is in his 5th season. Brandon is from Cedaredge.

Crew: Ricky Colton started in 2007 and is from Delta.

Crew: Nick Ackerman started in 2009 and is from Montrose.

Gunnison:

USFS Engine 671 (Type 6)

USFS Engine 672 (Type 6)

No report from Gunnison at time of printing.

LOG HILL MESA FPD CWPP



The Log Hill Fire Protection District has contracted the West Region Wildfire Council (WRWC) to produce a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) as well as an Operational Plan for wildland fires within their district.

The WRWC began work on the CWPP in July with a series of community meetings explaining the process and enlisting resident involvement in the plan's desired outcome. In addition to meetings with property owners from both Log Hill Village and Fairway Pines, WRWC has worked with the associations to send information via email and community newsletters. Postcards were mailed to those residents in the fire district not represented by an association. The CWPP will build on the recently completed Ouray County CWPP, but will also

include a parcel-specific wildfire home assessment. Each parcel in the district with a developed home will be evaluated based on its relative risk to wildfire - including elements such as roofing material, siding material, nearby vegetation, and adjacency to dangerous topography. Field work for the initial data collection will begin in August. It is anticipated that the CWPP will be completed by the beginning of 2012.

WRWC will also be developing an Operation Plan for firefighters to be better equipped to respond to a wildfire in their district. The plan will be a synthesis of fire behavior, water supply, evacuation routes and other conditions firefighters need to be aware of when planning how to respond an emerging incident. The Operational Plan is scheduled to be complete by mid-2012.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CWPP TASK FORCE

A task force of individuals representing San Miguel County, Town of Mountain Village, Town of Telluride, Telski, Telluride Fire Protection District, West Region Wildfire Council, USFS, and MIFMU met to discuss how and where to begin implementing recommendations from the San Miguel County CWPP. The task force is looking at several mitigation

project areas that would affect both public and private lands as well as an educational campaign for homeowners living in the highest risk communities. The group will be meeting again in early September before making a presentation to the Intergovernmental Group at their scheduled meeting on September 12th.



FIRE

2011 Fire Season Update

As expected, July has been the most active month for wildfires across the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit (MIFMU). Through July, there have been 84 wildfires across the unit in 2011. Forty-two of those fires occurred in July (50%). Although the number of wildfires are down slightly from the 10 year average (44.9), statistically we are on track for an average fire season.

The recent increase in thunderstorm activity has contributed to both the number of wildfires and smoke investigations. Conversely, the monsoonal influence across the region has caused a decrease in the number of resource orders to fires outside of MIFMU. Whereas 47% of all resource orders for 2011 occurred in June, only 11% occurred in July.

Of the 42 fires reported in July, two notable fires reported on June 30th carried into the month of July.

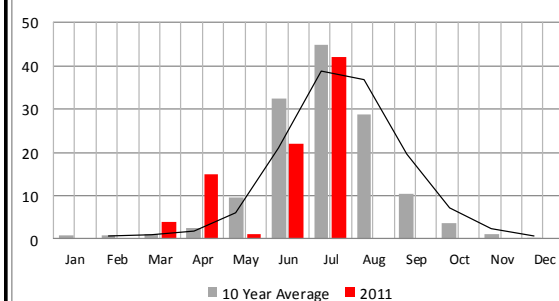
Pinon Fire

The Pinon Fire was located on national forest system lands 12 miles west of Nucla. The final size of the fire was 95 acres. In addition to local resources Rifle Helitack, 8 BLM smokejumpers, Lewis & Clark Hot Shots, Juniper Valley Type 2 handcrew and members from the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse assisted with suppression of the fire.

Beaver (Creek) Fire

The Beaver (Creek) Fire was located on national forest system lands 8 miles west of Gunnison. The final size of the fire was 67 acres. Fire officials and public land managers, in consultation with resource specialists, initially made the decision to manage the fire for resource objectives while maintaining safety to firefighters and the nearby community. Later the decision was made to suppress the fire as resource and cost containment objectives were no longer being met. In addition to local resources Rifle Helitack and the Juniper Valley Type 2 handcrew assisted with the management/suppression of the fire.

Number of Wildfires



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Look for new updates to come to the MIFMU website in 2010

http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2mtc/

August Events

- *Buckhorn Fire (Iron Complex), California, August 5, 2008 - 9 firefighters killed*
- *Decker Fire, California, August 8, 1959 - 7 people killed*
- *Smokey Bear's Birthday, August 9, 1944*
- MIFMU Fuels Conference Call, August 9
- Smokey Bear's 67th Birthday Party, Montrose Public Lands Center, August 9
- *Yellowstone Fires, Montana/Wyoming/Idaho, August 20, 1988*
- *Fires of 1910, Washington/Montana/Idaho, August 21, 1910 - 87 people killed*
- *Blackwater Fire, Wyoming, August 21, 1937 - 12 firefighters killed*
- MIFMU Fuels Conference Call, August 23
- *Canyon Inn Fire, California, August 23, 1968 - 9 firefighters killed*



MIFMU MONTHLY